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## THE WASHINGTON, D.C., SPELLING LIST

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In the Sixth Division of the Washington public schools, a plan for improving spelling was started about six years ago. It has been carefully developed and is now used in the entire city. At the circle meetings of each grade, the teachers were asked to bring lists of words which children habitually misspelled in their written work. Teachers conferred concerning the words and, after duplicates were struck out, lists were compiled. These were typewritten and were sent to each grade. Each teacher in the Sixth Division drilled on the list for her grade.

As the results were profitable, the next year the director of intermediate instruction asked teachers from the third grade to the eighth, inclusive, in the entire city to submit lists of the fifteen words which were most frequently misspelled by pupils of the grade. By careful work on the part of individual teachers and by conference in circle meetings, a list was made which is the result of the combined experience of practically all the teachers in the grades concerned. It consists of five hundred words in all, arranged in grade lists. The list for each grade is short, the longest comprising about one hundred words. The words, therefore, can be taught as well as assigned. More variety in presentation has been found possible, and greater accuracy in results has been obtained.

The list conforms to the standard of daily use. The words are those which are fundamentally common in American written usage—words which children and adults continually have need to use. The actual experience of pupils in the use of written English in our schools has been the basis for the grading of the lists. The lists specially aim to supply the needs of spontaneous written composition. Children are often asked to write a rough draft of some actual occurrence, in the writing of which the thought of the child is on content, not on spelling. This is a real test of the child's ability to spell.

## LATEST REVISED LIST

## THIRD GRADE

about	girl	than
across		they
animal	here	Tuesday
attic	hear	through
almost	have to	twelve
aunt	hundred	there
America	horse	their
again	house	together
always		thing
before	island	think
because	insect	thought
bird	Indian	two
bought		treasure
build	know	touched
beneath	laughed	until
baby	little	upon
beautiful		used to
caught	machine	United States
colors	many	
children	name	very
camel	nickel	
curtain		warm
clothes	once	wear
climb	other	were
city	our	where
country	often	which
		whose
does	people	went
Dutch	picture	with
	pretty	Wednesday
ever	pencil	when
every	piece	want
eleven	pleasant	who
earth		
enough	rough	
evening		
field	said	
first	school	
forty-eight	shoes	
from	Saturday	
forehead	squirrel	
father	stopped	
February		
farmer		

## FOURTH GRADE

all right	fourteen	receive
altogether	friend	remain
answer	find	really
Arctic	fourth	
Antarctic	forty-four	separate
	family	several
believe		straight
buy	grammar	scissors
bough	goes	sentence
	geography	subtract
cough	great	sugar
colored		
Chesapeake	hole	though
collar	hoist	tongue
coming		too many
capital	knee	truly
capitol		taught
carrying	listen	twelfth
chimney		those
circle	minute	towel
	meant	Thursday
different	mountain	trouble
daily		too much
divide	ninety	
division	neighbors	useful
	necessary	uncle
expect		
ease	period	weather
easy	poetry	whether
easily	Potomac	whole
empties	present	writing
errand		weak
except	quotient	
	quite	
	quiet	

## FIFTH GRADE

any	gypsy	scholar
ache	guard	surely
anxiety	growth	secret
against		studying
among	handkerchief	surprise
afraid		sincerely
although	its	soldier
Atlantic	imperative	strength
	interrogative	
beginning		temperature
business	library	
busy	length	usually
busily		
	muscle	village
certainly	mucilage	
carriage		whisper
complain	niece	written
continent	nephew	western
coast		wrist
		wholly
	obliging	
divisible	onion	
dining	ocean	
describe	ought	
destroy		
direction	potato	
	potatoes	
escape	pronoun	
equator	predicate	
equally	Pacific	
	promise	
false		
fierce	running	
farm		
fifty		
familiar		
farther		
four-fifths		

## SIXTH GRADE

auxiliary	height	quantity
absence		
accept	independent	represent
article	icicle	respectfully
adjective	immediately	repair
being	jewelry	reservoir
boundary		recipe
bureau	luncheon	receipt
cordially		sailor
consonant	mischief	seize
calendar	misspell	siege
cereals	measles	
choir	manufacture	syllable
cemetery	medicine	sauce
captain	ninetieth	Spanish
cousin	neither	scenery
decimal	oblige	thorough
during	occurred	unusual
declaration		
disease	pupil	vegetable
description	perhaps	
disappoint	parallel	
dictionary	possession	
excellent	prairie	
endeavor	preposition	
finally	possess	
foreign	phrase	
government	possible	
Great Britain	permanent	
guide	pleasure	
	pursue	

## SEVENTH GRADE

attorney	frequently	quince
apparel	forfeit	
attacked	faucet	representative
attendance		recommend
accommodation	group	religion
analysis		relative
aisle	hoping	related
apostrophe	hygiene	recognize
already		
acknowledge	interest	stirred
apartment		secrecy
baluster	judgment	scene
benefited	judicial	sovereign
Briton	knowledge	souvenir
biscuit	kerosene	secretary
		superintendent
coughing	language	similar
conscience	lettuce	spoonfuls
citizen		spinach
colonel	manual training	spigot
cleanse	monarchies	salary
croquet	managing	trait
campaign	martyr	transferred
compromise	modifying	threw
cabinet	Mediterranean	
ceiling		using
continually	physician	
commission	probably	vertical
college	persuade	vinegar
	parliament	
diphthong	precede	wrongly
definition	preparation	
development	promissory	zinc
decide	privilege	
disappear	punctual	
dissolve	perform	
	prune	
exercise	perceive	
executive	patient	

## EIGHTH GRADE

amateur	hyphen	ridiculous
angel	indictment	resistance
angle		respectably
algebra		
apologize	license	secede
aqueduct	leisure	supersede
	liquid	symptom
bouquet		society
bilious	moral	sufficient
	mortgage	synonym
committee	mischiefous	stationary
conscientious	menu	
comparative		tariff
criticise	neuter	
candidate	nominative	utensil
conduit	nasturtium	
chrysanthemum	ninety-ninth	virtue
chauffeur		vengeance
definite	occasionally	vaccinate
descriptive	occurrence	vicinity
discipline	origin	
descendant		
diphtheria	primitive	
debris	participle	
debut	principal	
	principle	
eligible	portiere	
embarrass	pursuit	
exhaust	prejudice	
existence	planning	
eighty-eighth	precinct	
exaggerate	perspiration	
forfeiture		
foreigner		
fatigue		
grammatical		
grateful		

The purpose of the list is to give to all pupils of the elementary grades the ability to spell the words that later school and social demands require them to be able to write.

In September, each teacher from the third grade to the eighth begins with the third-grade list and works on that list until the

school is practically perfect in it. By the close of the year each teacher is responsible for the words in her own grade and those in the grades preceding. At various intervals during the year tests from the lists are sent to each grade. These test papers are corrected and the results sent to the supervisor. Among the data given to the supervisor is a list of the seven words most frequently misspelled. These most frequently misspelled words are arranged in lists according to the grade, are typewritten, and are sent to each building for special emphasis.

This list does not represent the only spelling that Washington pupils have. The pupils have short daily lessons from a regular speller, but the list is the more vital and efficient of the two because it is an adjustment to a particular school system where there is a uniform course of study.

These lists have brought about a marked improvement in the spelling of the written work of the children of the Washington schools. Many of the deeply rooted mistakes have disappeared, such as the misspelling of "already," "separate," "truly," "all right," "have to," and so on. A proof of the improvement of the spelling is the unusually high averages recently attained by the schools in tests from the Ayres spelling list given by the superintendent of schools. In almost every case, classes made from 5 to 10 per cent higher than the standard percentage given.

Following the success with the words of daily use came the question of the spelling of difficult geographical names. It has been suggested in the Sixth Division that the children should not be burdened too early with the responsibility of this task. Instead, lists of these names are written on the blackboard or printed on cardboard, and the pupils are free to look at them in all geographical work, oral or written. Visual familiarity will surely bring about as successful results as we get in attempting to hold children responsible for the spelling of names which only exceptionally good spellers can master.